



## **Spiritual warfare- Part 03**

**2 Corinthians 10:1-6**, *Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.<sup>2</sup> But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.<sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,<sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,<sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

### **1. Compassion.**

An effective soldier is compassionate.

He is compassionate.

The best soldiers only use deadly force when they are absolutely required to!

### **2. Courageous**

Paul is not only compassionate, but he is courageous.

### **3. Competent/ Equipped.**

Compassion and courage would be useless if it were not competent.

Capability.

You can go as far as you want in trying to seek peace and ultimately you cannot and so you have to engage in battle.

You may have great courage to get into the fray, but unless you are competent, your courage will turn out to serve you no good at all.

You must have the weapons.

You must have the ability, the competence.

Without competence, courage becomes folly.

Without confidence, courage becomes folly.

Fools who had great courage but were ill-equipped and who plunged into the battle armed with nothing but courage and were left corpses. The arsenal of their enemy literally overwhelming them.

Paul warns these defectors that he was not have compassion and courage but also equipped.

To walk in the flesh morally would mean to be corrupt, to be wicked on the inside, driven by lust, greed, and pride.

**V 3**, *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.*

Paul does not walk in the flesh morally as they have accused him, but he does walk in the flesh physically.

He is simply saying I am human.

He denies the accusation that he is corrupt, but he agrees with the reality that he is human. He is walking in the flesh in the sense of being a physical human being.

**2 Corinthians 1:12**, *For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

**2 Corinthians 4:2**, *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

**Galatians 5:16**, *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

**Galatians 5:25**, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

So morally Paul did not walk according to the flesh but physically he was human.

Summary of Paul statement:

- I am an apostle,
- I bear apostolic authority,
- I am not a supernatural human being.
- My ministry is carried on in a frail human body.
- I am not controlled by the flesh, but I am human.

Because he is the apostle of Jesus Christ does not mean that he is somehow supernatural or superior humanly speaking. He is just like everybody else.

**2 Corinthians 4:7**, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

**2 Corinthians 5:1**, *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

**2 Corinthians 4:16**, *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

A clay pot.

Tent,

Decaying every day.

Though he is not then driven by wickedness on the inside, he is a man.

Life and ministry for Paul was war, it is war for all of us.

We do not have to fight it with human weapons. We are human but we do not use human weapons. It is always war. We are all engaged in it.

The kingdom of darkness is our opponent.

- We are fighting for the truth.
- The preservation and proclamation of the truth.
- We are fighting for the honour of Jesus Christ.
- We are fighting for the salvation of sinners.
- We are fighting for the virtue of saints.
- We are engaged in war.

**2 Corinthians 6:7**, *by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the Armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*

**Ephesians chapter 6**, he says take on the whole armour of God for we are wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and the rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies.

Paul reminds Timothy of the urgency of fighting the good fight.

**1 Timothy 1:18**, *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,*

**2 Timothy 2:3**, *You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

## **2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight.”**

Paul is engaged in a spiritual war for the preservation of the truth, the honour of Christ, the salvation of sinners, and the virtue of saints.

We cannot fight on that level with human weapons.

**V 3**, Paul makes it clear that,

We are not warring according to the flesh.

We are not using human weapons.

He would not fight with human ingenuity. He would not fight with clever methodology. He would not fight with technology. This is a war on another level.

**V 4**, *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.*

A negative is what it is not.

Positive is what it is.

- Human weapons have no effect.
- Human weapons cannot fight the kingdom of darkness.
- Human weapons cannot deal with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies.
- Human weapons cannot liberate souls from the kingdom of darkness.
- Human weapons cannot transform sinners.
- Human weapons cannot sanctify saints.

They have no effect in the spiritual realm, no effect on the kingdom of darkness, no effect on Satan, no effect on supernatural systems, no effect on the eternal souls of men.

**What are the weapons of the world?**

**What are the weapons of the flesh?**

Human reason,

Human wisdom,

Human plans,

Rationalism,

Strategies,

Organization,

Human skill,

Human eloquence,

Human cleverness,

Human entertainment,

Religious showmanship,  
Philosophical/psychological speculations,  
Mystics,  
Etc.,

You use those kinds of methodologies to get people to produce a better product on the assembly line. You use those kinds of things to make people happier with their environment, that make them get along better with their friends and family. Those are human things. You use those things to make people feel more emotionally stable or better about their life situation.

Such weapons only appear to be effective. They appear to be effective to people who have never seen and understood real fire power. Such weapons gain superficial temporary victories, and it soon becomes how clear evil is still ensconced.

Paul rejects all those and he really comes with true spiritual weapons.

The positive:

Weapons that are divinely powerful. We do not fight with weapons of the flesh but divinely powerful ones.

They are the weapons of God. We get them down from heaven. They are literally pulled down from God's own personal arsenal.

**V 4, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.**

We are dealing with strongholds/fortresses. A fortress was a very powerful image.

In Corinth there is the Acropolis, the high place. On the top of that Acropolis was a great fortified fortress, impregnable, that became the place to which the inhabitants of the city could retreat when they were engaged in a great conflict and from which they could defend themselves successfully.

Ancient cities were characteristically built a special fort where the people could be preserved. Many cities had the entire city walled and fortified with exterior and interior walls, great massive, thick, stone walls. These forts often had great towers, parapets from which people could scout and see encroaching enemy armies and from which they could fire whatever weaponry they had at their disposal.

If you had travelled to London Terry in Northern Ireland still you can witness a huge fortress wall where we can drive today.

The apostle Paul is saying that we have got some very formidable enemies to deal with and the weapons that it is going to demolish, must be formidable, and divinely powerful weapons.

Fortresses can mean prison. That, too, is a very interesting one.

These people who are established and entrenched in these great fortresses are also imprisoned in them. The very place they think is their refuge is the place where they are prisoners, and their fortress becomes ultimately their tomb.

Now, these great fortifications are never to be assaulted by some human means, worldly methodology or manipulation, because the stronghold in which sinners have entrenched themselves will never yield to such impotent weaponry.

The goal is not just to hit a few shots along the side, but to demolish them and to utterly bring them to disintegration.

**What are these fortresses?**

**What is he attacking?**

*V 5, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

**What is the fortress?**

*arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.*

We have these divinely powerful weapons for destroying fortresses and we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

Arguments/speculations, Greek word is **logismos**, it means thoughts, ideas, opinions, reasonings, philosophies, theories, ideologies, and religions.

Those are the forts in which men hide. Ideological forts, philosophical ones, religious ones, and in their forts, they try to hide and fortify themselves against God and against the gospel of Christ.

Please, would you notice these fortresses are not demons.

They are not demons. We have a lot of people who define spiritual warfare as chasing demons.

The Bible does not define it like that!

The Bible does not define spiritual warfare as us getting a group together to go march, find some demons and take authority over demons and send them off someplace.

Never is the church instructed to do that!

We are not fighting demons in a face-to-face confrontation or spirit-to-spirit confrontation or voice-to-voice confrontation.

Our enemy has formed from demon sources ideologies and we assault those ideologies.

Ultimately, they are doctrines of demons. They come from seducing spirits through hypocritical liars who build these great structures to human wisdom and demonic doctrine.

But we assault the system, we do not chase the spirits. Scripture indicates right here that our war is for the destruction of fortresses. They are not demons, they are human, demonically inspired ideologies set up in defiance of God.

Every concept, every opinion, every reason, every philosophy, every theory, every ideology, every thought that is against God.

That is a fortress. They get very strong and very powerful!

**1 Corinthians 3:19-20**, *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";<sup>20</sup> and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*

They are called the reasonings of the wise, the worldly wise. They are raised up against the knowledge of God.

**Romans chapter 1**, that everybody comes into the world knowing God, knowing enough about God to know His eternal power and Godhead, to be without excuse, but when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. They turned against God. They created gods of their own, they turned against the true God and fortified themselves in their own false systems. They have raised them up against the knowledge of God, raised them up against the gospel.

The whole realm of divine revelation and redemption, they have denied. All the anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Bible, ideologies spawned out of hell and put into their shape and form by men, all of that is the lofty thing, the speculation that must come down.

Paul knew these fortresses very well.

### **How?**

Paul himself had lived his whole life in one of them.

He was born and reared in one of these fortified anti-God systems.

Apostate Judaism. A Judaism that had reached the place where it was convinced that man could earn his own salvation through his own self-righteous works. Paul believed that.

Paul believed that he had gained heaven by being circumcised on the eight day, by being a member of the tribe of Benjamin, among the people of Israel, by being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, maintaining the Hebrew tradition, by being zealous toward the law and blameless.

He believed that he had achieved his own salvation.

**Acts 26:9**, *“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.*

Paul set himself against Christ. He raised himself up a fortress, lived in it, and it was raised up against the knowledge of God.

He had his own proud, human ideology.

He had found himself encased in this fortress, which was also a prison.

He had been deceived and was locked in a damning ideology.

Then on the Damascus Road, his fortress was demolished. Paul was led captive to Jesus Christ. Once his fortress of damning lies was impregnable, and it crumbled under the power of God.

All warfare, all spiritual warfare is aimed at smashing the fortresses of human reasoning against God. This is very important to understand!

Some cases it is religious, Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Soka Gakkai, whatever you want to call it.

On the other hand, it can be non-religious, it can be forms of naturalistic. The most influential intellectuals, philosophers, scientists, educators and politicians and judges in the world are naturalists.

A naturalist believes that God only exists in the mind, in the fantasy of religious non-intellectuals.

They control our governments.

In our universities, naturalism is the idea that nature is all there is, and that is the virtually unquestioned assumption on which all matters of life are based.

Those of us who believe in God and the gospel and the Bible are irrational, are dangerous to freedom, and must only be allowed to have limited influence on the public discourse and limited influence on the public culture.

God has no place in public life.

God has no place in education.

God has no place in government, social policy, law, courts, or in determining morality.

All this rejection of God is purported to be intellectual, to be scientific, to be freedom loving, and what it really is the love of sin.



The evolutionary atheism of our time is nothing other than one of these ideological fortresses. Evolution has led to the worst in human life.

Such are the fortresses of sinners.

Some of them are religious and some of them are, by our definition, irreligious.

Some of them are supernaturalistic, and some of them are naturalistic.

But in the end, they are great fortresses, formidable and not to be overthrown by human wisdom and power. These ideologies are entrenched in demonic reservoirs. They do not come down easily. What we need is some powerful weapons.

**V 5, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**

A magnificent picture.

### **What are these weapons?**

We are going to take all those thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ.

There is only one way to destroy error is with the Truth.

The only way you can take wrong thoughts and make them right is to replace error with Truth.

When we look at **Ephesians 6** and we see the Christian soldier with all his clothing. He has only one weapon.

Weapon is a sword which is the Word of God.

We do not fight the spiritual warfare with a bunch of anti-demon formulas whispered at them or shouted at them. We do not fight the spiritual warfare with magical spells.

The spiritual warfare that you fight is an ideological warfare that is fought at the level of the mind, and when you find people ensconced and entrenched in the great fortresses of these ideologies, you assault them with the truth.

It amazes me today that in this whole spiritual warfare movement, there is this tremendous interest in assaulting demons and fighting demons.

Here, where it says we are taking every thought captive, means literally to take a prisoner with a spear.

We smashed the fortress to the ground, went in, put a spear in the back of the prisoners and marched them out. That is a magnificent metaphor of rescuing a soul from damning lies.

We marched them right out and brought them into subjection to Jesus Christ.

Our spiritual warfare is about the truth and the honour of Christ and the consequent salvation of souls.

Paul lived in that great fortress with all the other self-righteous Jews, and the whole thing came crashing down around him, and he was taken captive to Jesus Christ. Immediately out of his mouth he says, *“Lord, what will you have me to do?”*

He knew what it was to have your fortified place destroyed and to be taken prisoner to Christ.

He even calls himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 3:1**, *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—*

That is why we expose false doctrine.

Because they are fortifications against the knowledge of God that become prisons. Old fortresses lie in ruins, though, around the world as the prisoners march off in a new allegiance to Jesus Christ.

That is the spiritual warfare.

The weapons are clear: the truths of the Word of God.

Do you want to fight the spiritual war?

Learn the Scriptures.

Learn how to deal with the error.

Learn how to confront the error with the truth.

Why do we spend all the time in the Scripture?

Can anyone of us identify any better weapon?

Rebellion ends when truth prevails. That is what we do!

We preach truth.

We teach truth.

We write the truth.

We proclaim the truth.

Only the Word of God can smash the lies.

If you are going to be out there in the spiritual war, you need to be armed, you need to know the Word of God.

Only the Word of God can smash the lies. It is the power of God.

**1 Corinthians 1:17-20**, *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. <sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." <sup>20</sup> Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

**1 Corinthians 1:25**, *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**, *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup> And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

Paul did not want to give a clever sermon that gets people to make some profession of faith in Christ because of the cleverness of his sermon. But want to hit them with the Word of God and let it do its real work.

Paul knew that there are lot of people who have been convinced by the wisdom of men, and that's not salvation. The Scripture is the weapon that smashes the fortresses that people have built up to buttress themselves against the knowledge of God.

**Hebrews 4:12**, *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The Word is the weapon!

**2 Corinthians 4:5**, *For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.*

**2 Corinthians 6:7**, *by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the Armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*

It is the Word of truth that carries the power of God that makes up the weapons of righteousness. Scripture is the only weapon that smashes the fortress and takes the people captive to Christ.

### **Why?**

Because you cannot see the error until you see the truth, and you cannot be converted until you understand the gospel.

Paul is not content just to destroy the false theories,  
Paul is not content just to smash the fortresses,  
Paul wants to bring the people under the saving Lordship of Christ.

He does not just say that we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing, he says we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Obedience always being the mark of true salvation.

**John 14:15**, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*

Obedience, always the mark of salvation.

We are bringing people out of these fortified refuges of lies and bringing them under Jesus Christ.

We are called to a spiritual war.

But you don't fight that war by chasing demons, you fight that war by knowing the Word, and you fight that war by assaulting the fortresses of lies that men have built up against the truth. You do it compassionately, but you do it also courageously.

You want to be patient,

you want to be gentle,

you want to give people time to comprehend and understand, but you also engage in the battle relentlessly, and when they are entrenched, you go to war.

The good soldier, the noble soldier is compassionate, courageous, and competent.

## **Conclusion:**

Be calculating. The good soldier understands you must take everything into account. Timing, very important.

Who is your enemy?

Recognizing him, getting him when he is vulnerable.

He knows there is an appropriate, propitious time and place when the enemy is clearly in sight and clearly defined.

**V 6**, *and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

The delay has nothing to do with cowardice. He is ready.

A direct threat to those who know they are to be obedient to Christ but refuse to do it.

**Why is he waiting?**

Paul is talking to the church.

Whenever the church collectively is complete in its obedience. Everybody who is true to the gospel has taken his stand. When you people are all finally agreeing to be obedient, and it is clear who the remainder are, then I am going to act.

I do not want to get you in the line of fire.

This soldier does not shoot everybody. This soldier is compassionate and gracious and gentle with those who respond, and with the rest, he comes with a fierce, warlike attitude.

How do we deal in this world in the spiritual warfare?  
Tenderly, patiently, compassionately, courageously.

There are times like that, but the spiritual battle must be fought.

You need to be compassionate, courageous, and competent.